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ACTION INR-00

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	WHA-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EUR-00	UTED-00	VC-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NEA-00
	DCP-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	PA-00	PER-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	TEST-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	SA-00	CRYE-00	R-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6358
INFO USCINCSO MIAMI FL//SCJ2
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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: KPAO, OPRC, KMDR, PREL
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION VENEZUELAN CRISIS MIDDLE EAST
04/15/02

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

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WEEK-END PAPERS HEAVILY ADDRESS VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT CHAVEZ' RETURN TO OFFICE YESTERDAY ON THE WINGS OF A POPULAR UPRISING TWO DAYS AFTER HE WAS OUSTED IN A MILITARY COUP, HIGHLIGHTING THAT CHAVEZ SAID HE HAS REFLECTED ON HIS MISTAKES AND IS PREPARED TO 'MAKE CORRECTIONS.' PAPERS ALSO REPORT THE PALESTINIAN SUICIDE BOMBER WHO KILLED SIX ISRAELIS WHEN SHE BLEW HERSELF UP OUTSIDE A CROWDED OPEN-AIR JERUSALEM MARKET, PLUNGING US SECRETARY OF STATE COLIN POWELL'S CEASE-FIRE MISSION INTO TURMOIL. IN THE DOMESTIC FIELD, LOCAL MEDIA REPORT THE PETITION GIVEN BY A GROUP OF CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS OF MERCOSUR LED BY SENATOR RAUL ALFONSIN TO ANOOP SINGH URGING THE IMF TO GRANT THE 'FINANIAL AID THAT ARGENTINA NEEDS TO KILL

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS
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A STUBBORN FOUR-YEAR RECESSION.'

2. SAMPLE HEADLINES

DAILY-OF-RECORD "LA NACION" (04/13): "CARMONA TAKES OVER AND DISSOLVES CONGRESS." (04/14): "CHAVEZ' VICEPRESIDENT TAKES OVER." "ARAFAT CONDEMNS TERRORISM AND MEETS WITH COLIN POWELL." (04/15) "CHAVEZ RETURNS: HE RESUMES POWER AND MODERATES HIS DISCOURSE." "THE US EXPECTS CHAVEZ TO CHANGE THE DIRECTION OF HIS GOVERNMENT." "CUBA, IRAQ, LIBYA AND IRAN CELEBRATE. THE REST OF THE WORLD CALLS FOR UNITY." "POWELL AND ARAFAT HAVE NOT ADVANCED TOWARDS A TRUCE." "COLOMBIA: CRIMINAL ATTACK AGAINST PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE URIBE." "EAST TIMOR ELECTS ITS FIRST PRESIDENT."

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LEADING "CLARIN" (04/13): "VENEZUELA: A BUSINESSMAN TAKES OVER AND DISSOLVES CONGRESS." "ARGENTINE SENATORS PROMISE ANOOP SINGH THAT THEY WILL ADVANCE WITH THE TWO LEGISLATIVE MEASURES REQUESTED BY THE IMF. IT IS THE AMENDMENT TO THE BANKRUPTCY LAW AND ECONOMIC SUBVERSION LAW." "A BUSINESSMAN TAKES OVER PRESIDENCY AFTER THE CIVILIAN-MILITARY COUP D'ETAT AGAINST CHAVEZ." "WASHINGTON BLAMES 'CHAVISM' FOR THE COUP D'ETAT." (04/14): "VENEZUELA: THE COUP D'ETAT FAILS AND CHAVEZ RETURNS TO POWER." "ARAFAT MEETS WITH POWELL." (04/15): "CHAVEZ PROMISES HE WILL NOT TAKE REVENGE." "WASHINGTON DOES NOT HIDE ITS FRUSTRATION DUE TO CHAVEZ' RETURN."

CONSERVATIVE "LA PRENSA" (04/13): "THE IMF MISSION IS STILL CONCERNED ABOUT LOW TAX COLLECTION." "HUGO CHAVEZ IS ARRESTED AND HE COULD BE SUBJECT TO IMPEACHMENT." "ISRAEL DELIVERS EVIDENCE AGAINST ARAFAT TO THE US." "POWELL'S MISSION DOES NOT MAKE PROGRESS." (04/14): "CHAOS IN VENEZUELA."

BUSINESS-FINANCIAL "AMBITO FINANCIERO" (04/15):
"CHAVEZ RESUMES IN VENEZUELA." "SHARON PROPOSES PEACE CONFERENCE."

LIBERAL, ENGLISH-LANGUAGE "BUENOS AIRES HERALD"
(04/13) "OILMAN TAKES OVER IN VENEZUELA." "SUICIDE BOMBER FOILS POWELL MISSION." "RAUL ALFONSIN TO ANOOP SINGH. 'TELL IMF TO SPEED UP DECISION.'" "FIRE AT UK CHEMICAL FACTORY SENDS HUNDREDS FLEEING." (04/14):
"CARMONA RESIGNS, CABELLO SWORN IN." "POWELL, ARAFAT

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TALKS ON AGAIN." (04/15): "CHAVEZ BOUNCES BACK."
"ARAFAT INSISTS ON PRIOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL."

3. OPINION PIECES AND BY-LINED STORIES

- "WASHINGTON DOES NOT HIDE ITS FRUSTRATION DUE TO
CHAVEZ' RETURN"

ANA BARON, LEADING "CLARIN'S" WASHINGTON-BASED
CORRESPONDENT, WRITES (04/15) "AFTER THE US HAD
THOUGHT IT WAS FREE FROM THE HUGO CHAVEZ PROBLEM FOR
EVER, THE US COULD NOT HIDE ITS FRUSTRATION TO SEE HIS
TRIUMPHANT RETURN TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE IN
CARACAS... IN FACT, WASHINGTON REFUSED TO TERM CHAVEZ'
DESTITUTION AS A COUP D'ETAT. ACCORDING TO THE US
DIPLOMACY, CHAVEZ WAS THE ONE WHO STARTED THE
INTERRUPTION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN VENEZUELA.
THIS IS WHY RICE SAID YESTERDAY THAT CHAVEZ NEEDS TO
RESPECT THE RULE OF LAW AND THE CONSTITUTION. WHILE NO
ONE IGNORES CHAVEZ INFRINGED THE RULES OF DEMOCRACY
SEVERAL TIMES IN VENEZUELA, MOST LATIN AMERICAN
COUNTRIES BELIEVE THIS DOES NOT JUSTIFY A COUP D'ETAT
UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AS SOME BUSH ADVISORS BELIEVE.
IN FACT, ONE OF THOSE ADVISORS EXPLAINED TO 'CLARIN'
IN AN 'OFF THE RECORD' STATEMENT THAT A COUP D'ETAT
CAN BE JUSTIFIED IN THE NAME OF HUMAN RIGHTS."

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- "WHAT LIES AHEAD: CIVIL WAR?"
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CLAUDIO URIARTE, LEFT-OF-CENTER "PAGINA 12'S"
INTERNATIONAL ANALYST, OPINES (04/14) "THE CLASSICAL
ELEMENTS OF CIVIL WAR SEEM TO BE IN THEIR PLACE IN
VENEZUELA: A POLARIZED SOCIETY, A FRACTURED ARMY.
BUSINESSMAN PEDRO CARMONA'S COUP EXPERIMENT COULD NOT
STAND UPRIGHT, AND THE ARMY DECIDED ITS DEFEAT...
NEVERTHELESS, NEITHER CHAVEZ RETURN NOR HIS DEPARTURE
WILL SCARE AWAY THE SPECTER OF CIVIL WAR. THAT IS TO
SAY, MILITARY AND POPULAR UPRISINGS IN FAVOR OF CHAVEZ
HAVE NOT ELIMINATED THE ANTI-CHAVEZ POPULAR UPROAR AND
MILITARY UPRISING... THE RAGE OF PART OF THE PEOPLE
AGAINST CHAVEZ IS REAL, AND IT IS MEASURED IN AN
INCREASING LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN A SOCIETY IN WHICH
MOST OF THE PEOPLE IS ARMED. THE GREATEST DANGER IN
VENEZUELA COMES FROM THE FACT THAT NO MILITARY CAN SAY
THAT THE FACTION HE LEADS HAS DECISIVE SUPERIORITY ON
THE OTHERS... SOMETHING SIMILAR HAPPENS IN THE
POLITICAL FIELD: ACCORDING TO THE LAST OPINION
SURVEYS, BEFORE CHAVEZ' DOWNFALL, HE HAD SOME 30 PER
CENT OF SUPPORT, BUT HIS DISPERSE OPPONENTS WERE NOT
BEYOND 10 PER CENT. IN THE HYPOTHESES OF A CALL TO
ELECTIONS, CHAVEZ IS HIGHLY LIKELY TO WIN, ALTHOUGH
THE PERCENTAGE OF SUPPORT HE COULD OBTAIN WOULD BE
SERIOUSLY DIMINISHED REGARDING HIS HISTORICAL
VICTORIES, AND WHAT IS EVEN MORE SERIOUS IS THAT THE
BLOODY LINE HAS BEEN CROSSED. THIS IS WHY, A COLD
CALCULATION INDICATES THAT THE CRISIS IS NOT IN THE
PROCESS OF BEEN SOLVED BUT DEEPENING. AND THAT IN A
PERMANENT 0 TO 0 SITUATION THE ONLY ELEMENT TO BREAK
THE TIE CAN BE AN ARMED CONFRONTATION."

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- "DEMOCRACY IS STRENGTHENED IN THE REGION. CHAVEZ' CHALLENGES"

OSCAR RAUL CARDOSO, LEADING "CLARIN'S" INTERNATIONAL ANALYST, OPINES (04/15) "... CHAVEZ' OUSTING WAS THE OUTCOME OF A TYPICAL LATIN AMERICAN COUP D'ETAT, WHICH IMPLIES AN ANTI-DEMOCRATIC CONSPIRACY... THEREFORE, HIS RETURN TO THE GOVERNMENT... IS THE BEST RESULT ONE COULD EXPECT NOT ONLY FOR VENEZUELAN POLITICAL HEALTH BUT FOR ALL LATIN AMERICA'S. AND THERE IS NO CRITICISM, SUSPECT OR INSULT THAT CHAVEZ CAN DESERVE THAT CAN SERVE TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE THE GOOD NEWS REPRESENTED BY THE DEFEAT OF THAT CONSPIRACY... THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S FIRST RESPONSE TO THE CARACAS DRAMA RANGED FROM DARK TO OMINOUS. WHILE ITS DIPLOMACY LOOKED FORMALLY NOT INTERESTED..., THE WHITE HOUSE DECIDED TO TURN THE VICTIM OF A COUP D'ETAT INTO AN EXECUTIONER. ARI FLEISCHER, THE US PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON, SAID THE CRISIS WAS CHAVEZ' RESPONSIBILITY. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT'S MISTAKES AND POLITICAL CLUMSINESS MADE POSSIBLE CHAOS, BUT THERE IS A LONG DISTANCE BETWEEN THIS AND THE DECISION NOT TO BLAME THOSE WHO DECIDED TO IGNORE THE CONSTITUTION."

- "A HARD RETREAT FOR THE US POLICY"

MARCELO FALAK, BUSINESS-FINANCIAL "AMBITO FINANCIERO'S" INTERNATIONAL COLUMNIST, WRITES (04/15)
"THE FOR THE TIME BEING PRECARIOUS END OF THE
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VENEZUELAN INSTITUTIONAL CRISIS IS A STRONG RETREAT FOR THE US POLICY IN THE REGION... FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE DEMOCRACY WAS REESTABLISHED IN THE REGION, THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS DID NOT MAKE ANY EFFORT TO AVOID AN IRREPARABLE COUP D'ETAT IN CARACAS. THE SILENCE WAS MORE NOTEWORTHY IN THE CASES OF THE US, BRAZIL AND THE OAS... THE CONCLUSION SEEMED TO BE THAT FROM THURSDAY ON MILITARY ADVENTURES ARE NO LONGER IMPOSSIBLE IN LATIN AMERICA... THE RETREAT FOR THE US IS MULTIPLE. ON THE ONE HAND, IT REVEALS A RUPTURE WITH THE POLITICAL INTERESTS OF LATIN AMERICAN PRESIDENTS, THEREBY REVERSING A DOCTRINE OF RESPECT FOR INSTITUTIONAL LEGALITY... ON THE OTHER HAND, THE US WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE DEALING WITH CHAVEZ, A CHARACTER THAT WAS INTOLERABLE FOR THE US, IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT HIS 'REVOLUTION' WAS MERELY RHETORIC AND GESTURE EXERCISE RATHER THAN A REALITY CAPABLE OF ALTERING THE

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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE VENEZUELAN SOCIETY... HOWEVER, WHAT WASHINGTON FEELS FOR CHAVEZ IS NOT MERE IDEOLOGICAL REPULSION... BUT THERE ARE TWO FACTS THAT REFER TO A MEANINGFUL CONFLICT OF INTERESTS THAT WILL REMAIN UNSOLVED AFTER THE FAILED ATTEMPT OF COUP D'ETAT. THE FIRST ONE IS RELATED TO OIL. CHAVEZ HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MAIN PROMOTERS OF A BROAD POLICY TO IMPLEMENT PRODUCTION CUTS AND, THUS,

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	TEST-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	SA-00	CRYE-00	R-00
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PRICE INCREASES IN REALM OF THE OPEC. THE OTHER ISSUE
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THAT REMAINS UNSOLVED AFTER CHAVEZ' SECOND POLITICAL
RESURRECTION... IS HIS ROLE IN THE COLOMBIAN CONFLICT,
WHICH APPEARS AS THE GREAT US PRIORITY IN THE
REGION... FROM NOW ON, WE WILL SEE WHETHER CHAVEZ WON

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THE HAND-WRESTLING OR THE BALANCE OF MILITARY FORCES IS SUCH THAT IT WILL ONLY PROLONG THE CRISIS A FEW MORE WEEKS OR MONTHS."

- "THE US EXPECTS CHAVEZ TO CHANGE THE DIRECTION OF HIS GOVERNMENT"

JORGE ROSALES, DAILY-OF-RECORD "LA NACION'S"
WASHINGTON-BASED CORRESPONDENT, COMMENTS (04/15) "THE WHITE HOUSE HAS NOT FINISHED DIGESTING CHAVEZ' RETURN TO POWER IN VENEZUELA... CHAVEZ IS CONSIDERED AN OPEN ENEMY OF THE US BY THE REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATION. HIS TIES WITH FIDEL CASTRO AND WITH THE HEADS OF LIBYA AND IRAQ... MAKE THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION SHIVER... (CHAVEZ') CRITICISM OF WASHINGTON DUE TO THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN AND THE SUSPICION OF HIS TIES WITH THE COLOMBIAN GUERRILLA HAVE PLACED CHAVEZ IN THE LISTING OF US ENEMIES. BUT THE WHITE HOUSE DID NOT LEGITIMATE THE GOVERNMENT ELECTED BY THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY (LAST WEEK END), A FACT THAT COULD HAVE GREEN LIGHTED ANTI-DEMOCRATIC SECTORS FROM OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES TO DESTABILIZE WEAK DEMOCRACIES AND IMPOSE AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENTS."

- "PARALLEL LIVES: ARGENTINA AND VENEZUELA"

MARIANO GRONDONA, DAILY-OF-RECORD "LA NACION'S"
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POLITICAL ANALYST, WRITES (04/14) "... THOSE WHO THINK THAT CHAVEZ' DOWNFALL IS AN ADVANCE OF WHAT COULD HAPPEN IN ARGENTINA ARGUE THAT, BASED ON THE PEOPLE'S DISAPPOINTMENT WITH TRADITIONAL PARTIES, WHICH WE (ARGENTINES) SHARE WITH VENEZUELA, WE STILL HAVE TO SEE THE ONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO FILL THAT 'POPULIST' GAP IN ARGENTINA, WHOSE EVENTUAL DEFEAT WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY A CIVIC-MILITARY COUP D'ETAT LIKE THE ONE THAT ALMOST (MADE CHAVEZ FALL). ONE FACTOR THAT UNITES AGAIN ARGENTINE AND VENEZUELAN EXPERIMENTS IS THE KINGDOM OF RIGHT-WING REPUBLICANS IN WASHINGTON, WHO DO NOT MIND TO SUPPORT CIVIC-MILITARY OR EVEN MILITARY REGIMES AS LONG AS THEY ARE FRIENDS."

- "POWELL AND ARAFAT HAVE NOT MADE PROGRESS IN OBTAINING A TRUCE"

ELISABETTA PIQUE, DAILY-OF-RECORD "LA NACION'S"
JERUSALEM-BASED CORRESPONDENT, COMMENTS (04/15) "... WHILE THE US SECRETARY OF STATE TERMED HIS MEETING

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(WITH ARAFAT) AS 'USEFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE,' THEY DID NOT MAKE ANY PROGRESS TO OBTAIN A CEASE-FIRE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. IN FACT, ARAFAT INSISTED ON THE NEED FOR AN 'IMMEDIATE' WITHDRAWAL OF THE ISRAELI FORCES FROM THE TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE DEFENSIVE WALL OPERATION, SOMETHING ISRAEL HAS ALREADY CLARIFIED IT WILL NOT DO UNTIL IT DISMANTLES 'THE PALESTINIAN 'TERRORIST INFRASTRUCTURE,' THEREBY DEFYING BOTH THE US AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. IN A VIRTUAL DEAF DIALOGUE, AND IN ADDITION TO THE US GOOD WILL, THAT NOTIFIED THAT POWELL'S MISSION WILL BE

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'FLEXIBLE' AND WILL BE AS LONG AS NECESSARY TO STOP WAR, THERE IS STILL PESSIMISM REGARDING A SOLUTION OF THE WORST CRISIS THE MIDDLE EAST HAS LIVED IN FIFTY YEARS."

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